

***Is It Really the Good Book?* Discussion Guide**

1. The authors describe the assumptions we bring to the Bible as “lenses” that affect (and can distort) our vision (see pages 9–10). Think of how you approach the Bible. What assumptions do you bring to it? Have you ever brought to the text any of the eight faulty assumptions on page 12? Which ones?
2. What do people today say about the Bible? What surprised you about the authors’ description of the Bible (see pages 20–24)? How would you answer the question “What is the Bible?”
3. What comes to your mind when you think of the legacy of the Bible? In your experience, has the Bible been more of a positive or negative force? How has reading this chapter reshaped your view of it?
4. The authors write, “When evaluating or interpreting a work of art, it’s wise to first consult those who are genuine experts on it” (page 51). Do you agree with this principle? Why or why not? In what ways is the Bible “the church’s book”? In what ways would it benefit a person considering the Bible’s claims to consult Christian experts?
5. In what ways do “social imaginaries” (see pages 81–85) inform the ways in which we see the world? What social imaginaries affect the way people read the Bible today? How might living in another time or place (with its own set of social imaginaries) change the way you read it?
6. What is the doctrine of inerrancy? Why do the authors not advocate an all-or-nothing approach to inerrancy? What does it mean that the Bible is highly reliable?
7. What does the doctrine of the “perspicuity [clarity] of Scripture” reveal about how we can understand the Bible? How does the doctrine of Scripture’s clarity intersect with passages that are difficult to understand? How are modern readers at a disadvantage when it comes to understanding Scripture? What advantages do modern readers have?
8. In what ways is the interpretation of Scripture both a science and an art? How are the goals of hermeneutics (the science of interpretation) and forensics similar? Which of the eight rules of interpretation found on pages 122–128 stood out to you the most? Why?
9. What does it mean that “the Bible was written *for* us, it was not written *to* us” (page 151)? In what ways is reading the Bible like visiting another culture? Why is it important to understand the historical context of the Bible’s original audience?

10. Many people think of the Bible as an ancient rule book. Why is this a false assumption? What does it mean to universalize, spiritualize, and moralize a passage of Scripture? Why is this a dangerous way to interpret the Bible?
11. What do the authors mean when they say that the Bible “is not a formal history book” (page 185)? What expectations do you have when you think of a history book? In what ways does the Bible meet or not meet those expectations?
12. How would you have characterized the relationship between the Bible and science before reading chapter 11? How do you see their relationship after reading the chapter? Did anything change? Why or why not?
13. What are the differences between biblical justice and social justice? How does reconciliation guide the Bible’s approach to justice? How does “clearing the mechanism” affect your reading of challenging passages like the ones presented in chapter 12?
14. What questions do you still have about the Bible? Which of the interpretive methods presented in the book might help you to better discover answers to your questions? What faulty assumptions might be standing in your way?